

wherein the acoustic gasket is bonded to and coextensive with the at least one adhesive support system so as to not impede independent movement of the membrane in the inner unbonded region.

11. (amended) The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one membrane is ePTFE.

12. (thrice amended) The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim 1, wherein said microporous membrane is [supported] bonded only around its periphery by a plurality of adhesive support systems.

26. (twice amended) A method of using a microporous membrane as a sound-transmissive acoustic protective cover for an electronic device having a transducer, comprising:

[supporting] providing an assembly consisting essentially of a microporous membrane having an inner unbonded region and a periphery bonded region, said membrane being bonded [only] around its periphery [with] to at least one adhesive support system such that at least a portion of the inner unbonded region of said membrane is exposed to the atmosphere and free to move in response to acoustic energy; and

orienting said supported microporous membrane so as to cover the transducer in the electronic device, thereby forming a sound-transmissive acoustic protective cover;

whereby the cover has an instantaneous water entry pressure of at least one meter water column and an overall acoustic transmission loss of no more than 3 dB in the range of frequencies from 300 to 3000 Hz.

Please add new claims 28-36 as follows:

-- 28. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim 1, wherein said adhesive support system further comprises at least one supplemental bonding site extending across a portion of said inner unbonded region.--

9 -- 28. A sound-transmissive cover assembly ^{consisting essentially of} comprising:
a microporous membrane layer having first and second surfaces and a perimeter defined by its edges, at least one of said surfaces bonded to a support system to form a periphery bonded region surrounding an inner unbonded region of the microporous membrane, whereby said first and second surfaces of said inner unbonded region are exposed to the atmosphere and free to move in response to acoustic energy, said assembly having an instantaneous water entry pressure of at least one meter water column and an overall acoustic transmission loss of no more than 3 dB in the range of frequencies from 300 to 3000 Hz.--

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--~~30~~. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim ⁹~~28~~, wherein said support system comprises at least one adhesive ring.--
- ¹¹
--~~31~~. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim ⁹~~28~~, wherein said support system comprises a plastic encapsulation.--
- ¹²
--~~32~~. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim ⁹~~28~~, further comprising means for bonding the assembly to an acoustic device.--
- ¹³
--~~33~~. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim ⁹~~28~~, wherein the assembly further comprises a black color.--
- ¹⁴
--~~34~~. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim ⁹~~28~~, wherein the assembly further comprises an oleophobic treatment.--
- ¹⁵
--~~35~~. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim ⁹~~28~~, wherein the assembly further comprises an acoustic gasket;
wherein the acoustic gasket is bonded to and coextensive with the at least one adhesive support system so as to not impede independent movement of the membrane in the inner unbonded region.--
- ¹⁶
--~~36~~. The sound-transmissive cover assembly of claim ⁹~~28~~, wherein the at least one membrane is ePTFE.--

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended by Examiner Dabney during the interview on October 30, 2001. During the interview, differences between the construction of the Repolle '012 assembly and the 'captive construction' assembly of the present invention were described and shown. Particularly, it was presented that the assembly of the present invention differs in both construction and performance from the cited Repolle '012 patent. A Declaration from inventor Chad A. Banter is attached summarizing the discussion and enclosing the exhibits shown during the interview. A further summary of the outstanding rejections and points discussed at the interview is included in the following remarks.

Claims 1-12 and 24-27 were rejected in a Final Office Action dated September 18, 2001. The specification and claims 1, 6, 11, 12 and 26 have been amended, and new claims 28-36 have been added to better clarify the unique features of the claimed invention. Support for the amendment to the specification can be found in the Figures, particularly in Figures 3-6. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found in the "Detailed Description of the Invention," such as at, for example, page 8, line 26 through page 9, line 6.